THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Saturday, the 20th November 1948.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at twelve of the clock, the Deputy President (SRI K. VENKATASAMI NAYUDU) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Number of persons bitten by sharks in the Madras Beach.

* 83 Q.—SRI S. B. ADITYAN : Will the Hon. the Premier be pleased to state—

(*a*) how many persons have been bitten by sharks in the Madras Beach in 1948 (up to date);

(*b*) how many of them died as the result of such injuries; and

(*c*) what steps have been taken to make the beach safe for bathing?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN (on behalf of the Hon. the Premier) :—" (*a*) Two persons were bitten by sharks in the Madras Beach in 1948 up to date.

" (*b*) Both of them died.

" (*c*) The Corporation of Madras has been taking certain protective measures in connection with sea-bathing on special festival occasions like Mahalaya and Mahodaya Amavasyas, Masi Makham, Solar and Lunar eclipses, etc. Bathing in the sea is permitted only near the shore opposite to (1) Ice House Road, (2) Office of the Inspector-General of Police, (3) Rifle Range, San Thome; and (4) the High Court.

" The coast is patrolled by specially engaged catamarans, one per centre. Rescue work is attended to by the Sanitary Inspectors and Medical Officers of the Corporation who are specially deputed for the work. In co-operation with the Boy Scouts and the Police, they patrol the coast at the four places mentioned. First aid is given wherever necessary. An Ambulance is always kept ready to meet any emergency. Wide publicity is given to all these measures by timely notification in the local dailies, and the public are advised not to go into deep waters and to be wary of sharks.

" When police constables go on patrol they are instructed to advise people not to go far into the sea."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Why not put up strong wire-fencing in these bathing areas to prevent the sharks coming in? "

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THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is not possible to fence the sea."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know if the Government are aware that there are different kinds of sharks? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Yes, Sir, Government are aware that there are two-legged sharks walking on land."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Is it not a fact that these shark-bites took place at places where bathing is permitted? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I cannot prevent people going inadvertently into deep waters and we have taken necessary precautions to prevent them from going into deep waters."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Are the Government satisfied that the precautions taken are sufficient? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" As far as possible it is effective."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Has any compensation being given to the families of persons who died? "

THE HON. DR. T. S .S. RAJAN :—" I do not think any compensation can be claimed for the risk that they took in spite of all that has been done."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Are the Government aware that bathing places can be fenced? I know it has been done in Singapore and several other places. Could not some such thing could be done here? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I will remind the hon. Member that we have one of the longest sea beaches here available for public for recreation and bathing and only in certain places there is a risk of sharks. But we have specified places where they could go and have a bath where necessary precaution have been taken for people doing so."

Training of Home Guards.

* 84 *Q.*—SRI S. B. ADITYAN : Will the Hon. the Premier be pleased to state—

(*a*) what the training centres for Home Guards are;

(*b*) how many persons are trained in each centre;

(*c*) what are the subjects in which training is given and for how long;

(*d*) the details of the staff employed in each centre and their salaries; and

(*e*) what the estimated annual expenditure in each centre is?